The Secret Covenant

God Made Before Creating Adam

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A scholarly companion to the six-sequence cinematic documentary, tracing each theological pillar of the script to its primary source — and marking, with deliberate honesty, the points at which the chronicle departs from those sources for cinematic and original-narrative purposes.

“What you were taught was not the beginning. What you were taught was the consequence of a beginning that no scripture in your possession dares to name.”

A Note on Method

An Author's Statement Concerning Sources, Reimagination, and Honesty

The chronicle you have heard is an original cinematic composition. It is not a translation of any one tradition, nor does it claim doctrinal fidelity to any of the schools whose vocabulary it borrows. It is, instead, a *reimagination* — a poetic synthesis in which threads drawn from Kabbalistic theosophy, the Enochic apocalypses, the Sethian and Valentinian Gnostic codices recovered at Nag Hammadi, the Hermetic and Neoplatonist transmissions, and the Greek mythopoeic tradition of *Lethe* have been woven into a single continuous cinematic voice.

Where the chronicle speaks of *Tzimtzum*, of the *Watchers*, of the *seven folds*, of the *sparks within the husks*, it does so with reverence for the source-traditions from which these images have descended. But the chronicle also takes liberties — narrative liberties, dramaturgical liberties, theological liberties — that no responsible scholar of any of these traditions would defend as accurate exposition of the originals. This bibliography exists to make those liberties visible. Each entry lists what the script drew from the source, and what the script invented, dramatized, or recombined.

The reader who wishes to follow these threads back to their roots is encouraged to consult the original texts in scholarly editions. The chronicle is the door. The sources are the country beyond the door.

I. The Kabbalistic Stratum

Sources anchoring Tzimtzum, Ein Sof, the holy sparks, the husks, and the labor of tikkun.

The Zohar (Sefer ha-Zohar)

Attributed to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (2nd c. CE); compiled in its present form by Moses de León, Castile, late 13th c.

The foundational text of theosophical Kabbalah, composed as a mystical commentary on the Torah. The Zohar develops the doctrine of the *Sefirot* — the ten emanations through which the hidden *Ein Sof* becomes manifest — and meditates extensively on the cosmic significance of *Adam Kadmon*, the Primordial Human, as the original blueprint from which both the structure of divinity and the structure of the human creature are derived. Standard scholarly edition: Daniel C. Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 12 vols. (Stanford UP, 2004–2017).

> **Used in the script for:** The vocabulary of *Ein Sof* as the limitless, unconditioned Source; the figure of *Adam Kadmon* as the pre-temporal prototype debated by the Council; the theological gravity of cosmic emanation and withdrawal.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *The Zohar does not present Adam Kadmon as the subject of a contractual deliberation among Watchers and Archons. That council is a deliberate cinematic fusion of Kabbalistic, Enochic, and Gnostic motifs.*

Etz Chayim (The Tree of Life) — Chaim Vital

Chaim Vital (1543–1620), recording the oral teachings of Isaac Luria (the Ari, 1534–1572). First printed Koretz, 1782.

The principal written record of *Lurianic Kabbalah*, the most cosmologically ambitious system in the Jewish mystical tradition. Vital transmits Luria's three pivotal doctrines: *Tzimtzum* (the divine self-contraction by which the Infinite withdrew to make space for finite existence), *Shevirat ha-Kelim* (the shattering of the primordial vessels that could not contain the divine light), and *Tikkun* (the long generational labor of mending, by which scattered sparks of light are extracted from the husks and returned to their Source). Critical study: Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, ch. 7 (Schocken, 1941); Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford UP, 2003).

> **Used in the script for:** The entirety of Sequence I (*Tzimtzum* as the wound in the Infinite); the *nitzotzot* (holy sparks) and *qelippot* (husks) that constitute the two materials of the Prototype's forging in Sequence IV; the doctrine of *birur* (extraction) and *tikkun* (repair) as the cosmic labor performed through human suffering throughout Sequences III and VI.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *Luria teaches Tzimtzum as an act of love and pedagogical condescension, not as a wound. The chronicle deliberately darkens the doctrine for dramaturgical weight. Luria also does not present the covenant as a pre-temporal contract in the contractual-legal sense the script employs.*

Sefer Yetzirah (The Book of Formation)

Anonymous; earliest stratum likely 2nd–6th c. CE. Standard scholarly edition: A. Peter Hayman (Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

The oldest extant Jewish mystical text, brief but extraordinarily dense, setting out a cosmogony in which the universe is structured through the thirty-two paths of wisdom — the ten *Sefirot* and the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet — by which God shapes existence.

> **Used in the script for:** The general conception that creation is an act of *structuring* rather than mere making, and that the cosmos has an architectural rather than narrative grammar. This informs the script's recurring imagery of *architecture*, *blueprint*, and *schematic*.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *The Sefer Yetzirah is concerned with cosmogonic structure, not with covenant or contract. The script borrows only the structural sensibility.*

II. The Enochic Corpus

Sources anchoring the Watchers, the heavenly assembly, and the pre-Adamic deliberation.

1 Enoch (The Ethiopic Book of Enoch)

A composite work of five books, written in stages c. 3rd c. BCE – 1st c. CE. Preserved in full only in Ge'ez (Ethiopic); Aramaic fragments survive at Qumran. Standard edition: George W. E. Nickelsburg & James C. VanderKam, 1 Enoch: A New Translation (Fortress, 2004).

The most important non-canonical apocalypse of the Second Temple period. The *Book of the Watchers* (1 Enoch 1–36) describes the descent of the *Irin* — the wakeful ones, the heavenly Watchers — and their fateful involvement with humanity. The *Book of Parables* (1 Enoch 37–71) develops the cosmology of the heavenly court, the throne-vision, and the appointed roles of the angelic hierarchies. Enoch himself, the seventh from Adam, is taken up into the heavens and shown the secret architectures of creation, judgment, and the cosmos.

> **Used in the script for:** The figure of the Watchers (*Irin*) and the *Bene ha-Elohim* throughout Sequence II; the convention of a heavenly assembly that deliberates over cosmic matters; the named figures Shemyaza, Michael, and Samael as voices in the Council; Enoch's role as the visionary chronicler who walked among such beings and returned to write of them.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *1 Enoch places the Watchers' deliberations after the creation of humanity, not before. The chronicle relocates the assembly to a pre-temporal moment for dramaturgical purposes. The specific dialogue assigned to Shemyaza, Michael, and Samael in Sequence II is original composition, not translation of any Enochic passage.*

2 Enoch (The Slavonic Book of the Secrets of Enoch)

Probable composition 1st c. CE; preserved in Slavonic manuscripts. Critical text: F. I. Andersen in James H. Charlesworth, ed., The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, vol. 1 (Doubleday, 1983).

A second apocalypse attributed to Enoch, extending the heavenly-ascent tradition with a tour of the seven (in some recensions, ten) heavens, each with its appointed beings and functions. 2 Enoch elaborates the bureaucratic and ceremonial dimensions of the celestial order.

> **Used in the script for:** The schema of *nested heavens* and *layered orders* informs the chronicle's vision of the soul as a nested vessel (nefesh, ruach, neshamah, chayah, yechidah) in Sequence IV, and the seven folds of the veil in Sequence V.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *2 Enoch's seven heavens are ascending realms, not descending folds of forgetting. The script inverts the schema to dramatize the descent.*

The Book of Giants

Fragmentary; preserved in Aramaic fragments at Qumran (4Q203, 4Q530–533, 6Q8) and in Manichaean recensions. Critical edition: Loren T. Stuckenbruck, The Book of Giants from Qumran (Mohr Siebeck, 1997).

A Second Temple composition expanding the Watchers tradition with the deeds and dreams of their gigantic offspring. Contributes to the broader Enochic mythos of cosmic transgression and judgment.

> **Used in the script for:** Atmospheric and visual texture for Sequence II — the sense of beings vast in stature, bearing weights that mortal flesh could not carry.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *Not directly thematic. Used only for tonal and imagistic register.*

III. The Gnostic Codices

Sources anchoring the Archons, the divine spark trapped in matter, and the Veil of Forgetfulness.

The Apocryphon of John (The Secret Book of John)

Sethian Gnostic; composed late 1st – mid 2nd c. CE; preserved in four Coptic manuscripts (three at Nag Hammadi: NHC II,1; III,1; IV,1; plus the Berlin Codex BG 8502,2). Standard edition: Michael Waldstein & Frederik Wisse, The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices (Brill, 1995).

The most fully developed of the Sethian Gnostic cosmogonies. The Apocryphon recounts the emanation of the *Pleroma* from the unknowable Monad, the fall and the production of the Demiurge Yaldabaoth, the generation of the *Archons* (the Rulers, the Powers) who govern the lower cosmos, and the fashioning of the first human being as a vessel into which a stolen spark of the higher light is sealed — unbeknownst to its makers.

> **Used in the script for:** The figure of the *Archons* as architects of the human prototype throughout Sequences II and IV; the central doctrine that the human creature is a *hybrid* of divine light and lower matter; the conception of the *pneuma* as a hidden spark whose presence the constructing powers themselves do not fully comprehend.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *In the Apocryphon, the Archons are antagonistic and the trapping of the spark is essentially a tragedy. The chronicle reframes the situation as a covenant — a contractual labor undertaken with cosmic purpose — which represents a deliberate softening and theological repurposing of the original Gnostic pessimism.*

The Hypostasis of the Archons (The Reality of the Rulers)

Sethian Gnostic; composed c. 3rd c. CE; preserved in Coptic, NHC II,4.

A mythopoetic exposition of the Archons' relation to humanity, narrating their attempt to seize the spiritual element from the first human beings and the protective intervention of higher revealers. The text emphasizes the Archons' limited cognition: they perceive the human creature as their creation, but cannot perceive the higher principle dwelling within it.

> **Used in the script for:** The image of the Archons as *architects who do not fully understand what they are building* — informing the moment in Sequence IV when the Prototype's awareness exceeds what the architects had anticipated.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *The Hypostasis casts the Archons as adversaries. The chronicle treats them more ambiguously, as functionaries within a larger covenantal order.*

The Gospel of Truth

Valentinian Gnostic; attributed by some scholars to Valentinus himself (c. 140 CE); preserved in Coptic at Nag Hammadi (NHC I,3).

A meditative homily on the human condition as a state of *forgetfulness* and on salvation as *awakening to the Father*. Famously evocative in its imagery of the soul as a sleeper, unaware of its origin, who must come to knowledge (*gnosis*) in order to return.

> **Used in the script for:** The fundamental architecture of Sequences V and VI: forgetfulness as the *condition* of incarnation, and awakening as the conscious recognition of one's true origin. The phrase *Veil of Forgetfulness* in the script's premise is most directly indebted to this text and its Valentinian milieu.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *The Gospel of Truth treats forgetfulness as a calamity to be reversed; the chronicle treats it as a functional necessity of the covenant — a consent mechanism, not a simple tragedy.*

The Tripartite Tractate

Valentinian Gnostic; composed c. 3rd c. CE; preserved in Coptic at Nag Hammadi (NHC I,5).

A long systematic exposition of Valentinian cosmology, including the tripartite classification of humanity into *pneumatikoi* (spiritual), *psychikoi* (soulish), and *hylikoi* (material), reflecting differing capacities for awakening.

> **Used in the script for:** The doctrine of the *heavy bearers* in Sequence III — those souls carrying a greater portion of the salvage labor — is informed by the Valentinian recognition that not all souls bear the same weight of spiritual task.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *The chronicle rejects the hierarchical and exclusivist tendencies of Valentinian classification; it treats all souls as gatherers, differing only in the weight of their portion.*

IV. The Hermetic and Neoplatonist Transmissions

Sources anchoring the descent of the soul, the layered architecture of being, and the doctrine of return.

The Corpus Hermeticum

Greek philosophical-religious tractates attributed to Hermes Trismegistus; composed c. 1st–3rd c. CE in Hellenistic Egypt. Standard scholarly translation: Brian P. Copenhaver, Hermetica (Cambridge UP, 1992).

Eighteen treatises and related fragments expounding a Greco-Egyptian mystical philosophy of the descent and ascent of the soul. The *Poimandres* (Corpus Hermeticum I) is especially significant: it describes the soul's passage through the seven planetary spheres on its descent into a body, acquiring at each sphere a layer of constraint and forgetting; and its reverse passage, on death or initiation, in which each layer is shed.

> **Used in the script for:** The structural conception of the *seven folds of Lethe* in Sequence V owes its most direct debt to the Hermetic doctrine of the seven planetary veils acquired in descent. The image of awakening as a *shedding of layers* in Sequence VI also derives from this tradition.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *The Hermetic veils are planetary in nature; the chronicle's folds are psychological and ontological, calibrated to specific strata of the Kabbalistic soul. The seven folds are therefore a synthesis of Hermetic structure with Kabbalistic anthropology — an original composition, not a translation.*

Plotinus, The Enneads

Plotinus (c. 204–270 CE); compiled posthumously by Porphyry. Standard edition: A. H. Armstrong, Loeb Classical Library, 7 vols. (Harvard UP, 1966–1988).

The foundational text of Neoplatonism. Plotinus develops the doctrine of emanation from the One through Intellect (*Nous*) and Soul (*Psyche*), and articulates the descent of individual souls into bodies as well as their capacity for return through contemplation.

> **Used in the script for:** The general philosophical framework of *emanation and return* that underwrites the script's movement from the contraction of the Infinite (Sequence I) to the awakening of the spark (Sequence VI). The Plotinian *One* stands behind the chronicle's *Ein Sof* as a conceptual cousin.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *Plotinus does not employ the language of covenant or contract. The chronicle imposes a contractual frame on what Plotinus treats as a natural metaphysical process.*

V. The Greek Mythopoeic Sources

Sources anchoring the doctrine of Lethe and the drink of forgetting at the threshold of incarnation.

Plato, Republic, Book X — The Myth of Er

Plato (c. 428–348 BCE); standard translation: Allan Bloom, The Republic of Plato (Basic Books, 2nd ed. 1991).

At the close of the Republic, Plato narrates the vision of Er, son of Armenius, who returns from death to recount the journey of souls. Of particular relevance: each soul, before reincarnation, must pass through the *plain of Lethe* and drink from its river — the drink of forgetfulness — in measured portions. Those who drink more forget more; the philosopher drinks little and retains the most memory of the upper realms.

> **Used in the script for:** The naming of Sequence V (*The Seven Folds of Lethe*); the conception that forgetting is *administered* at the threshold of embodiment rather than naturally occurring.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *Plato's Lethe is a single river, drunk in one measured portion. The chronicle's sevenfold structure is original and is built by synthesis with Hermetic and Kabbalistic schemas.*

Hesiod, Theogony

Hesiod (c. 700 BCE); standard edition: M. L. West (Oxford UP, 1966).

The archaic Greek cosmogony, in which *Lethe* (Forgetfulness) appears as a personified power, daughter of Eris (Strife), sister of Ponos (Toil) and Algea (Pains). The Theogony establishes Lethe's kinship with the elements of suffering that the chronicle treats as the currency of the covenant.

> **Used in the script for:** The implicit linkage in the chronicle between forgetfulness and labor — Lethe and Ponos as sisters — informs the script's argument that the veil and the work are functionally interdependent.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *Hesiod is not a source of doctrine; the connection is suggestive rather than systematic.*

The Orphic Gold Tablets

Greek funerary inscriptions, c. 4th c. BCE – 2nd c. CE; recovered from burials in southern Italy, Crete, and Thessaly. Standard edition: Fritz Graf & Sarah Iles Johnston, Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets (Routledge, 2nd ed. 2013).

Small inscribed gold leaves buried with initiates of Orphic-Bacchic mystery cults, providing the soul with instructions for the afterlife. Most famously, the tablets warn the soul to *refuse the water of Lethe* on the right and to drink instead from the spring of *Mnemosyne* (Memory) on the left.

> **Used in the script for:** The chronicle's central image of *remembering as the labor of the awakened* derives from this Orphic instruction. The Sequence VI imperative to *ratify* the covenant consciously is a structural echo of the Orphic initiate's choice of Mnemosyne over Lethe.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *The Orphic tablets address the post-mortem moment; the chronicle relocates the same choice to the living present.*

VI. Modern Scholarly Anchors

Critical works consulted for accuracy of doctrine, contextualization, and responsible synthesis.

Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism

New York: Schocken Books, 1941; many subsequent editions.

The foundational modern scholarly treatment of Kabbalah in the Western academy. Indispensable for any responsible engagement with *Tzimtzum*, *Shevirat ha-Kelim*, and *Tikkun*.

> **Used in the script for:** Conceptual scaffolding for Sequences I, III, and IV; vocabulary calibration throughout.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *Scholem reads Lurianic Tzimtzum as theologically optimistic; the chronicle's darker reading is a deliberate cinematic recasting.*

Elliot R. Wolfson, Through a Speculum That Shines

Princeton University Press, 1994.

A rigorous study of vision, imagination, and the gendered architecture of the divine in medieval Jewish mysticism. Particularly important on the phenomenology of mystical apprehension.

> **Used in the script for:** Calibration of the chronicle's epistemology of awakening in Sequence VI — the careful distinction between *information*, *experience*, and *recognition*.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *Wolfson is a scholar; the chronicle is a poet. The borrowing is conceptual, not technical.*

Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion

Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; 3rd ed. 2001.

The classic existential reading of Gnosticism, framing the doctrine of the spark trapped in matter as a profound articulation of the human condition of *thrownness* and longing for return.

> **Used in the script for:** The chronicle's emotional register in Sequences IV through VI — the sense of the human creature as exiled, laboring, longing — owes a great deal to Jonas's existentialist reading.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *Jonas reads Gnosticism as fundamentally tragic. The chronicle ends in ratification rather than lamentation.*

April D. DeConick, The Gnostic New Age

Columbia University Press, 2016.

A contemporary scholarly reassessment of Gnostic traditions, with attention to their reception and reanimation in modern religious imagination.

> **Used in the script for:** Awareness of how Gnostic motifs migrate into contemporary spiritual discourse, informing the chronicle's calibration of which images would *read* on screen for a modern audience without requiring translation.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *The chronicle is a creative work, not a scholarly reception study.*

Loren T. Stuckenbruck, The Myth of Rebellious Angels

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014.

A comprehensive critical study of the Enochic Watchers tradition and its reception across Second Temple Judaism, early Christianity, and beyond.

> **Used in the script for:** Anchoring the chronicle's treatment of the Watchers (Sequence II) within the actual range of ancient testimony, rather than later popular imagination.
>
> ***Where the chronicle departs:*** *The chronicle's pre-temporal council is a dramaturgical placement not found in the sources Stuckenbruck examines.*

Colophon

A Final Word from the Chronicler

Every source named in this bibliography has been treated as a thread in a larger tapestry. None has been treated as a doctrine to be reproduced. The chronicle is not a translation of any of these texts; it is a cinematic imagination, woven from their materials, structured by their themes, but answerable in the end only to the demands of its own art.

The reader who wishes to verify is encouraged to consult the originals in scholarly editions. The reader who wishes to dream further is encouraged to return to the chronicle itself, and to listen for what the sources said *between* their words — for it is there, in the silences between the received traditions, that the cinematic chronicler has done the patient work of listening, and the still more patient work of writing what was heard.

— End of Bibliography —